

**VOTE OF THANKS BY CLLR KHULUKAZI PHANGWA, MAYOR OF
UMZIMVUBU MUNICIPALITY TO THE PROVINCIAL ABOR WEEK HELD
AT BUFFALO NEK J.S.S. NJIJINI LOCATION, MT FRERE ON 2011/09/07**

Programme Director

Guest Speaker

Chief Makaula & Inkosana of this Administrative Area

EXCO Members

Councillors

Heads of Government Departments

Ladies & Gentlemen

It is with a sense of gratitude that I want to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation to the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries for taking a decision to hold this year's Provincial Abor Week at Umzimbubu Local Municipality.

Today we have witnessed history in the making.

Our thanks also go to the local community for the support rendered towards the preparations of this event.

I was made aware of the fact that there were numerous preparatory meetings that took place here in this village.

All these meetings were preceded by those that were held at the municipal offices in Mount Frere.

In this regard, I want to commend both the provincial and municipal officials for the sterling work they did to make sure that this event is the success it is.

I would also like to particularly thank the local traditional leader for hosting us.

Equally, my thanks also go to the Head of the Makaula Traditional Council, under whose jurisdiction this area falls.

It is my firm belief that today's proceedings are aimed at encouraging the community, the schools and the youth to plough trees.

Trees play a major contribution towards environmental management. From a hygienic point of view we all know that trees are able to purify the air and oxygen we so need to breathe.

It is therefore important to plant trees to ensure a greener Umzimvubu and ultimately a greener South Africa.

In this regard I must emphasize the fact that it is also our joint responsibility to protect both the founa and flora (i.e. trees and plants)

During these trying times of global warming and climate change, let us all discourage all those who believe that it is their task to embark on deforestation.

On the contrary, our joint task is afforestation.

I am saying this with confidence because Umzimvubu Municipal area was identified as one of the municipalities that have a potential for forestry development.

In this regard, it has been noted with concern that the process of afforestation licensing moves at a very slow pace, despite the potential that is there.

I therefore challenge the relevant authorities to consider this issue with the necessary urgency it deserves.

For an example, my municipality has initiated a Pole Treatment Plant at Ward 21 in Mawusheni Village here in Mount Frere.

This project is based on the feasibility study that we have commissioned.

For this project we will spend not less than R2 m and there will be a substantial number of job opportunities that will emerge in the process.

It is my hope and belief that all of us will make it a point that we give a practical meaning to the THEME of this event, and the theme is **“FORESTS FOR THE PEOPLE”**.

It is therefore important to note that this theme is in line with the United Nations initiatives for the celebration of the International Year of Forests.

Also critical is for our people to get involved in forestry poverty alleviation through job creation.

We must also strive to promote awareness on the dangers of veld and forest fires. We must also direct our energy towards the preservation of indigenous trees.

Towards concluding I must indicate that the significance of the indigenous trees is that they consume less volume or quantity of water and they are ever-green trees.

You all about trees like yellow wood (Umsalinge), olive trees (Umnquma) and many others.

Lastly I thank everybody here particularly my colleagues in Council and it is our hope that we will ensure that today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today.

With those few words I thank you very much!!